

Annual Operating Instructions
Taylor Creek, Jordan Mesa, East Canyon Allotments
2018 Grazing Season

Wilderness Ranger District
Gila National Forest



Agreed to By: /s/ Permittee Date: Feb 20, 2018
Range Allotment Permittee

Prepared By: /s/ Allen Graves Date: Feb 20, 2018
Allen Graves
USFS Wilderness District Range Manager

Approved By: /s/ Rachelle Huddleston-Lorton Date: Feb 20, 2018
Rachelle Huddleston-Lorton,
USFS Wilderness District Ranger

Annual Operating Instructions (AOI)

Allotment: Taylor Creek (#506), Jordan Mesa (#505) & East Canyon (#503)

Permit Number: 61448 (Taylor Creek, East Canyon), 61336 (Jordan Mesa)

A. Permitted Use

Allotment	Numbers	Type	Season
Taylor Creek	263 Cow/Calf	Term	3/1-2/28
Taylor Creek	7 Horses	Term	3/1-2/28
Jordan Mesa	200 Cow/Calf	Term	3/1-2/28
Jordan Mesa	10 Horses	Term	3/1-2/28
East Canyon	175 Cow/Calf	Term	3/1-3/30 & 11/1-2/28
East Canyon	5 Horses	Term	3/1-3/30 & 11/1-2/28

B. Authorization

The following is authorized to graze in 2017:

Allotment	Numbers	Type	Season
*Taylor Creek	85 Cow/Calf	Term	3/1-2/28
*Taylor Creek	5 Horses	Term	3/1-2/28
*Jordan Mesa	Non-Use	Term	Non-Use
**East Canyon	60 Cow/Calf, 3 Bulls	Term	3/1-4/30 & 10/1-2/28
**East Canyon	5 Horses	Term	3/1-4/30 & 10/1-2/28

*Refer to the Memorandum of Understanding for the Taylor Creek and Jordan Mesa Allotments.

C. Counting Livestock

The standard for counting livestock on an allotment is as follows:

1. All livestock six (6) months of age or older at the time of entering the National Forest and all weaned animals regardless of age will be counted against the permitted numbers on the allotment and charged for at the current rate.

D. Non-use

Application for credit or refund must be made in writing and in advance by the Permittee to the District Ranger or District Range Manager using Form FS-2200-0001 (Refund, Credit, or Transfer Application). When it is not possible to be timely in getting to the Wilderness Ranger District Office, the Permittee may phone in to notify the District Ranger or District Range Manager that a request for refund or credit will be submitted soon. The Permittee will then either complete Form FS-2200-0001 (Refund, Credit, or Transfer Application) at the next visit to the Wilderness Ranger District Office, or request for the form to be mailed to the permittee.

Note: Credit or refund applications will not be processed unless value is \$100.00 or more and the District Ranger or District Range Manager had been notified either in advance or at the time livestock were removed from NFS Lands. Form FS-2200-0001 can be provided in writing to the District Ranger or District Range Manager through postal mail or e-mail, or filled out in-person by visiting the District Office.

E. Bovine Trichomoniasis (Trich)

Prior to import into New Mexico, non-virgin breeding age bulls must test negative for Trich. Non-virgin breeding age bulls sold within the state of New Mexico must be tested negative within 30 days prior to change of ownership. As of February 26, 2010, bulls 12 months of age and older are required to have tested negative for Trich within 30 days prior to entry on the allotment. Virgin bulls not exposed to breeding are exempt from testing if less than 12 months of age. The past requirement of a signed affidavit from the owner for the virgin status of bulls 12 TO 24 months of age is no longer applicable. Please contact the New Mexico Livestock Board for more details. Documentation must be provided to the District Ranger or District Range Manager that demonstrates that bulls 12 months of age or older have tested negative for Trich within 30 days prior to entry on the allotment.

F. Management

Pasture Rotation:

Allotment	Pasture	Time Frame
Taylor Creek	Lake/River/Hoyt/Kemp Mesa	3/1-2/28 (all cattle/horses)
East Canyon	Middle/ Lower/ Headquarters/ Water Canyon	10/1-2/28**

Please notify the District Ranger or District Range Manager of livestock movements onto and off of the allotment, as well as refinements that may be needed to enhance the management system. If the Permittee identifies the need to differ from this management system by more than 15 days, please contact the District Ranger or District Range Manager at the District Office at least two weeks in advance so the district has time to conduct monitoring and assess the request.

G. Utilization Standards and Monitoring

1. **Taylor Creek Allotment:** the allowable use level will be light to conservative use (20-35%) in accordance with the Decision Notice signed on September 1, 1995.
2. **Jordan Mesa Allotment:** the allowable use level will be conservative use (35%) in accordance with the Decision Notice signed on April 14, 1999.
3. **East Canyon Allotment:** the allowable use level will be conservative use (30-40%) in accordance with the Decision Notice signed on September 1, 1995.

Key areas and restricted areas (such as owl Protected Activity Centers) will be visited to determine actual grazing use and seasonal use by livestock and wildlife. Monitoring will be conducted within two weeks before or after livestock leave a scheduled pasture. If utilization levels within portions of a scheduled pasture approach allowable use, the Permittee is required to move livestock into areas not approaching allowable use. If livestock cannot be effectively managed away from areas within the pasture that have met allowable use or if utilization objectives are met throughout the pasture prior to scheduled rotation, contact the District Ranger or District Range Manager. Livestock will be moved into the next available pasture within the annual rotation. In the event that forage utilization objectives are met in all available pastures, livestock will be removed from the allotment. Management adjustments may be made to the following years Annual Operating Instructions to avoid recurring situations.

The following dates have been tentatively scheduled for monitoring on the allotment. The Permittee is highly encouraged and invited to participate in monitoring with District personnel and/or independently.

Allotment	Pasture	Tentative Monitoring Date
Taylor Creek	Lake/River	5/10 & 9/13
Jordan Mesa	Holding 1/Rock Bottom/East	5/11 & 9/14
East Canyon	Middle/Lower/Headwaters/Water Canyon	4/1 & 9/1

H. Forage Growth and Water Availability

Per Part 2, clause 8(c) of the Term Grazing Permit; total or partial livestock removal from the allotment may be necessary if forage growth and water availability are not adequate during all or portions of the current grazing season.

I. Salt and Supplement Policy

Supplemental feeding of livestock is allowed (to strategically manage livestock distribution and forage use) as follows:

1. Place supplements on previously disturbed areas (i.e., borrow pits) or natural bedrock outcrops when possible (supplement sites).
2. Locate supplement sites at least 0.25 mile from waters and key areas except where prior written permission has been obtained from District Ranger.
3. Locate supplement sites where forage is abundant and utilized less than average.
4. Limit supplement types to non-energy feeds such as salt, protein and mineral blocks.
5. Use products that prevent the spread of noxious weeds, there is to be no feeding of hay on National Forest System Lands.
6. Where possible, locate salt and supplements beyond view from roads, trails, campgrounds and trailheads.

J. Grazing Restrictions

The Taylor Creek allotment includes Mexican Spotted Owl Protected Activity Center's (PAC). In these PAC's the following activities are restricted during the breeding season (March 1-August 31): livestock concentrations or trailing, fence construction, and livestock salting. Routine maintenance of range improvements is allowed.

K. Range Improvements

All assigned range developments identified in the Term Grazing Permit must be maintained to a functional status. It is very important, and required, to continue assigned range improvements maintenance, even while in non-use or partial-use status.

Advance notification, planning and agreement are required for stock tank cleaning and range improvement reconstruction or replacement, including fences and water systems, to evaluate the need for surveys. General maintenance/repair is excluded from this requirement. The District Ranger or District Range Manager must be notified by phone or email in advance (at least 2 weeks, except for emergencies) if these types of work are proposed. The Permittee must wait for agreement from the District Ranger or District Range Manager before proceeding with the work.

Please protect natural springs and areas with riparian type vegetation. Drainage bottoms, creeks, springs, and cienegas, where water is available, are most susceptible to livestock concentrations.

You will meet with Allen Graves, Range Staff on April 6, 2017 to develop and identify a maintenance or reconstruction schedule of key range improvements for the Taylor Creek, East Canyon and Jordan Mesa Allotments.

1. Fences

When constructing new fence or conducting fence maintenance, ensure that fences are wildlife friendly. Wildlife friendly fences also usually lead to fewer damaged fences. The ideal wildlife friendly fence should allow relatively easy passage for wildlife to jump over and crawl through and under, and is highly visible for both ungulates and birds. Fences should be low enough for adult animals to jump. Deer and elk easily tangle their back legs if the top wires are too close together. The bottom wire or rail should be high enough for pronghorn, elk calves and fawns to crawl under. Increasing visibility using a top rail, high-visibility wire, flagging or other visual markers/tags can help ungulates and birds, such as hawks, owls, ducks and geese to better navigate fences. Replace barbed-wire with smooth wire wherever possible. Reduce the number of wires to three, or at most four.

Consistent with recommendations from the NM Department of Game and Fish, wildlife friendly fencing includes a smooth (barbless) bottom strand, at least 16 inches above the ground, wire spacing of 10-15 inches with the top two strands spaced 10-12 inches apart, and a total fence height of no more than 40 inches above the ground. In areas of high big-game use, specifically where game trails cross fences or near fence corners, fences should be built to allow big-game to jump over; the top strand should be smooth or the top strand should be covered with a white, 1 inch PVC pipe or have a drop-down or other passage options.

Wires should be tight with frequent stays to prevent twisting the wires together. Sagging wires and neglected fences create a hazard for both domestic livestock and wildlife.

Remove old fences that are in disrepair or no longer in use. Remove any unnecessary interior fences. Bale and carry away piles of wire. Some recycling centers will recycle old wire.

Contact the Wilderness Ranger District for the availability of materials and for permit modifications.

2. Completed Improvements in current grazing year:

The following range improvements were completed during the past grazing season:

- a. **Fences: fences between upper and Middle & between Middle and Lower have been completed.**
- b. **Water Systems: water lot at pothole tank has been completed.**

3. Planned Improvements:

The following range improvements (see maps) were discussed and planned for this grazing season:

- a. **Fences: 2.5 miles of fence # 5511 will be reconstructed during the 2018 grazing season. The district will furnish fence materials.**

b. Water Systems: Rock Bottom and John tanks will be cleaned in 2018.

L. Term Grazing Permit and Compliance

The Taylor Creek, Jordan Mesa and East Canyon Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are a part of the Term Grazing Permit as provided for in Part 3, Section 8. The AOI complies with the standards and guidelines found in the September 1, 1995 Taylor Creek Allotment Decision Notice, the April 14, 1999 Jordan Mesa Allotment Decision Notice and the September 1, 1995 East Canyon Allotment Decision Notice. The AOI also complies with the Endangered Species Act on-going grazing consultation for the Allotments. Any additional information collected during the year may be incorporated into the annual operating instructions.

M. Travel Management

The Gila National Forest Travel Management Decision signed in September of 2013 was implemented July 1, 2016 on the Wilderness Ranger District. This rule prohibits cross country motorized travel and has restricted all motorized vehicle travel on the Gila NF to authorized motorized routes only on National Forest Land.

Some motorized uses are exempt from the prohibitions of the designation process (36 CFR 212.51(a). "Motor vehicle use that is specifically authorized under a written authorization issued under Federal law or regulation" (CFR 212.51(a)(8) is one of the exempted uses. The permittees and/or their employees must comply with all GNF Travel Management regulations, except those allowed under this authorization as described below.

1. The permittees and/or their employees may be authorized for off road or unauthorized travel routes on their specific grazing allotment(s) to carry out the necessary activities for grazing and livestock management. **The decision to authorize motor vehicle use will be determined at Annual Operating Instruction meetings.** This includes range improvement maintenance and/or reconstruction as designated in their grazing permit, placement of salt or other supplements, and for emergency livestock health purposes.
2. **It is prohibited to operate any vehicle off National Forest System, State or County roads in a manner which damages or unreasonably disturbs the land, wildlife, or vegetative resources (36 CFR 261.15(h)).** Moist soils are especially susceptible to damage through rutting or compaction; therefore, use of motorized vehicles on saturated soils should be avoided.
3. **Utilize roads or trails designated for motor vehicle use to access range improvements, salting grounds, or livestock emergencies where possible.** This includes trails and roads open for public use, those specified as "administrative use only" and keeping within fence rights-of-way while accomplishing fence maintenance where possible.
4. **This authorization and associated activities are specific to your grazing permit(s) and allotment management only.**

N. NEPA AND APPEAL RIGHTS

These Instructions implement the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) decisions for the Taylor Creek Allotment and East Canyon Allotments dated September 1, 1995 and the Jordan Mesa Allotment dated April 14, 1999. These Instructions are not eligible for appeal under 36 CFR 251.